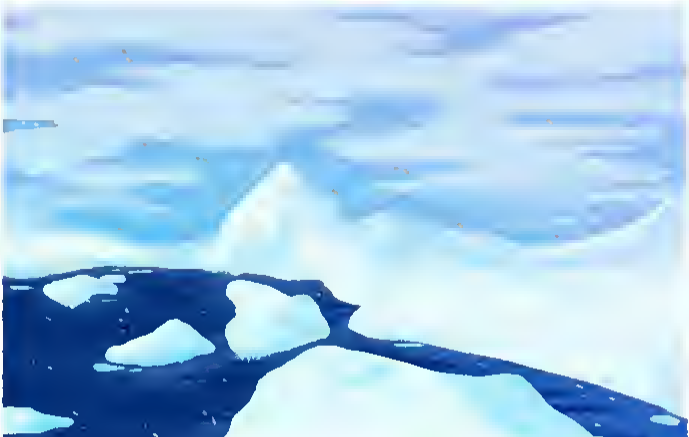
THE SWORD INTERVAL

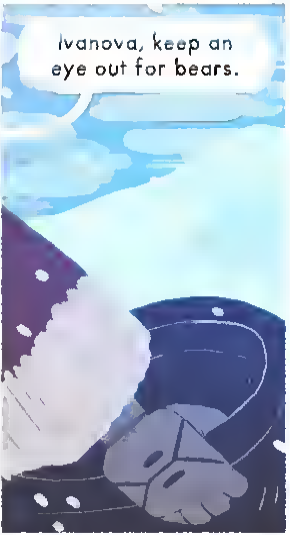
NANISIVIK, 1983

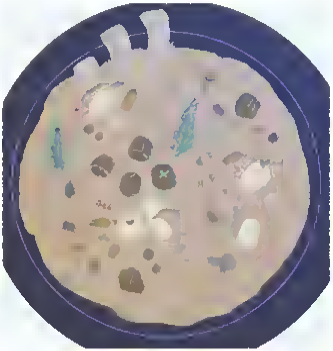
A SHORT STORY BY NATASHA AND ALI, WHO HAVE THEIR OWN FANTASY COMIC
OPHIUCHUS WHICH YOU CAN READ AT SERPENTBEARER.COM

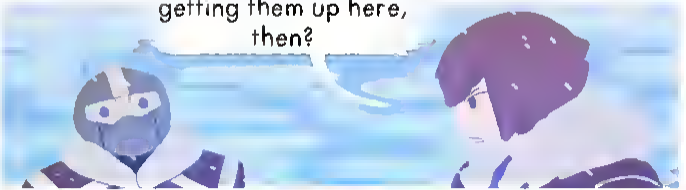
12 YEARS AGO...



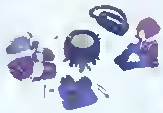
This is as close as we can get safely.


Ivanova, keep an eye out for bears.



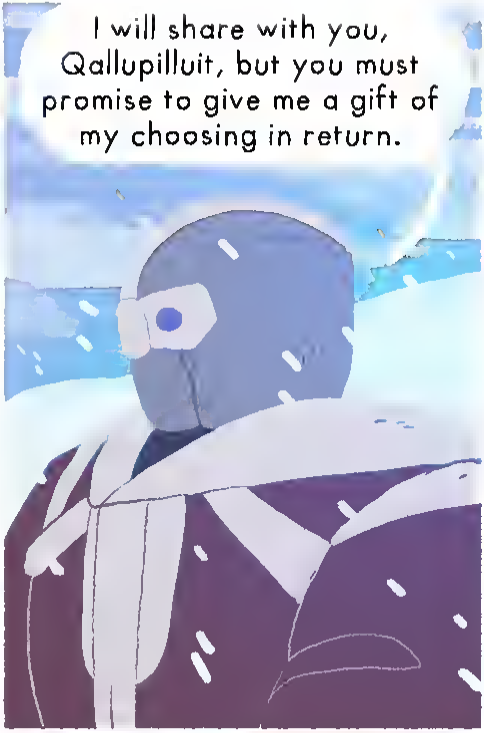

How are we
getting them up here,
then?

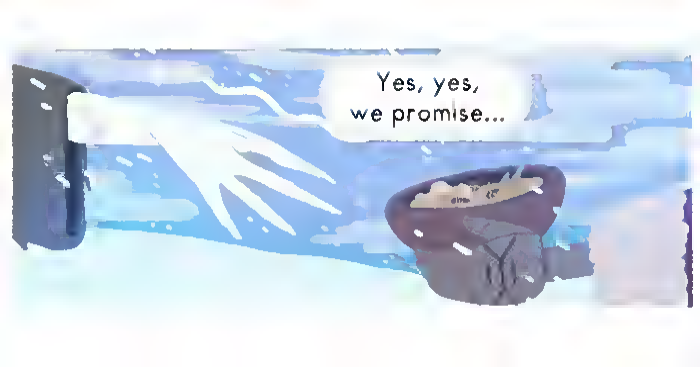
Be patient.
They will smell the stew,
and come to us.



Qallupilluit,
this is not for you.

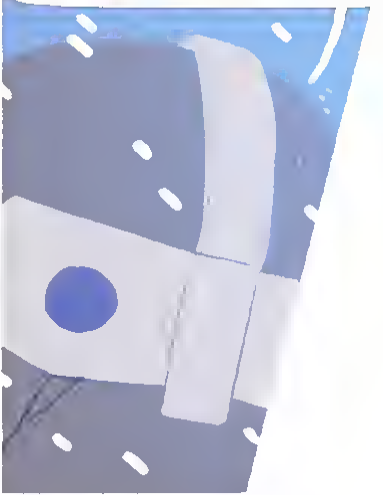
But we are hungry...
sea salt weighs heavy in our stomachs...
give us your hearth-water....


I will share with you, Qallupilluit, but you must promise to give me a gift of my choosing in return.


Yes, yes,
we promise...

Now then, Qollupilluit. You have promised me a gift.

I would like you to give to me the girl you snatched through the ice two days past.

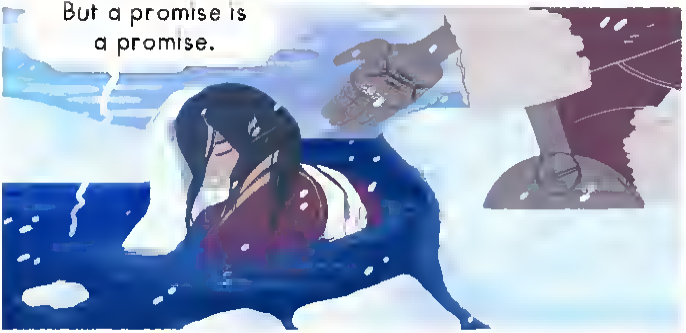


What!
An unfair trade!
Tricked us!
Unfair, unfair!

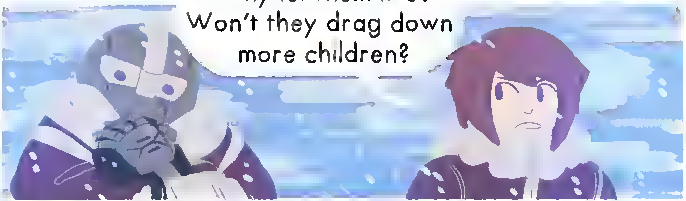
Wait.

A promise is
a promise.

A trick!
Tricky hunting thing!
But the soup was good...
A thief!
A bad trade!


But a promise is
a promise.

A promise is a
Prrrommisssee..


Why let them live?
Won't they drag down
more children?

The Qallupilluit serve a purpose. Children who fall through the ice die of cold before they have time to drown.

Children who wander into the dangerous areas and instead are stolen by Qallupilluit live long enough to be rescued.